THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) While it is known that bio-fuel has been prepared in USA using grains like wheat, bajra, maize, soyabeen etc. and while Government are aware of the news item published in Lokmat edition of 3rd February 2003, the cost details of preparation of bio-fuels from grains in USA are not known.

(b) IOC (R&D) has conducted the studies to produce bio-diesel from various vegetable oils (edible and non-edible) on bench scale & pilot plant scale and has tested their suitability as a diesel component.

Mangalore-Hassan-Bangalore pipeline project

728. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up the laying of the Mangalore-Hassan-Bangalore LPG pipeline work;

(b) if so, what is the present status of the work;

(c) what is the estimated cost of the above work;

(d) whether Government are aware that a large number of LPG tanker accidents are taking place every day on Mangalore-Bangalore route; and

(e) if so, whether Government would take the above work on priority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) and (e) Such projects are taken up on the basis of economic viability and technical feasibility of the project.

Auction of new blocks by ONGC

729. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the process of auction of new exploration blocks for Crude and Natural gas by ONGC is on;